

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 02672 121028Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 HA-05 AID-05 SSM-03 /103 W
-----080575 121734Z /43

R 120919Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7948
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 2672

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, LE
SUBJ: SOUTH LEBANON: CONVERSATION WITH CECIL HOURANI

1. PROFESSOR CECIL HOURANI, AN EXPERT ON MIDDLE EAST AFFAIRS, FORMER ADVISOR TO PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA AND A NATIVE OF MARJAYUN IN SOUTH LEBANON, CALLED ON CHARGE MAY 11, PRIOR TO RETURNING TO MARJAYUN THIS WEEKEND FOR A SHORT VISIT. HE SAID THAT IN HIS VIEW UNIFIL IS GOL'S BEST AND PERHAPS LAST OPPORTUNITY TO REGAIN CONTROL IN SOUTH LEBANON AND HE DEEPLY REGRETTEED THAT PRESENT GOVERNMENT WAS NOT TAKING ADVANTAGE OF IT. HE SAID LEBANESE SHOULD HAVE IMMEDIATELY ASSIGNED LIAISON OFFICERS TO EVERY UNIFIL UNIT AND HE HAD SO RECOMMENDED TO FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS. BECAUSE OF ITS FAILURE TO DO SO, GOL DID NOT KNOW WHAT WAS GOING ON IN SOUTH LEBANON AND WAS THEREFORE NOT ABLE TO MAKE INTELLIGENT RECOMMENDATIONS TO UN HEADQUARTERS IN NEW YORK. HOURANI AGREED THAT LEBANESE GENDARMES COULD PLAY USEFUL ROLE IN MAINTAINING ORDER IN
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 02672 121028Z

SOUTH LEBANON, BUT THEY WERE NO SUBSTITUTE FOR THE KIND OF LIAISON AND INFORMATION GATHERING HE BELIEVED WAS ESSENTIAL.

2. HOURANI ALSO SAID GOL HAD MADE SERIOUS ERROR BY ALLOWING UN AND PLO TO HOLD BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS WITH A GOL REPRESENTATIVE PRESENT. AS A RESULT, PLO WAS ABLE TO PRESENT A COMPLETELY ERRONEOUS PICTURE TO UNINFORMED UN OFFICIALS

WITHOUT CORRECTION. AS AN EXAMPLE, HOURANI SAID THAT ACCORDING TO BASIL AQL (WHO SAID HE WAS PRESENT) ARAFAT HAD TOLD ERSKINE IN THEIR LAST MEETING THAT PALESTINIANS WHO WERE BEING FIRED ON BY UNIFIL FORCES WERE ATTEMPTING TO MOVE NORTH, TO ESCAPE AREAS OCCUPIED BY THE ISRAELIS, AND NOT SOUTH, IN ORDER TO REINFILTRATE UNIFIL AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY. (ERSKINE HAD REPORTEDLY REPLIED THAT THIS INFORMATION PUT THE PROBLEM IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT.) PLO HAD ALSO TOLD UN OFFICIALS THAT RESTORATION OF GOL SOVEREIGNTY IN SOUTH LEBANON WAS A BILATERAL MATTER BETWEEN PALESTINIANS AND GOL AND DID NOT INVOLVE UN. SINCE NO GOL REP WAS PRESENT IN THESE DISCUSSIONS, THEY WERE UNABLE TO REFUTE THIS CLAIM.

3. HOURANI EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT PALESTINIAN REJECTIONISTS WERE TRYING TO RETAKE CONTROL OF BOURHAZ ON THE LITANI RIVER, TWO KILOMETERS NORTHWEST OF KAWKABA. THIS, HE SAID, IS A KEY LOCATION WHICH WOULD GIVE PALESTINIANS A ROUTE FOR INFILTRATION OF BLAT/MARJAYUN AXIS IF AND WHEN ISRAELIS WITHDREW. HE SAID THAT IT WAS THIS EFFORT BY REJECTIONISTS WHICH HAD CAUSED CLASHES DURING PAST FEW DAYS WITH NORWEGIAN UNIFIL FORCES IN KAWKABA.

4. TURNING TO DOMESTIC POLITICS, HOURANI SAID THAT LEBANON IS DISINTEGRATING AND SARKIS IS DOING NOTHING ABOUT IT. UNLESS THE PRESIDENT TAKES MORE AGGRESSIVE ACTION SOON, HE SAID, "SARKIS MAY HAVE TO GO." PART OF THE PROBLEM WAS
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 02672 121028Z

THAT SARKIS HAD APPOINTED AN ESSENTIALLY WEAL PRIME MINISTER IN SALIM AL-HOSS. SARKIS HAD GATHERED ALL THE POWER IN HIS OWN HANDS, BUT HE HAD NOT USED IT. HOURANI SAID THAT SAEB SALAM (WHO IS A NEIGHBOR) WOULD MAKE A MUCH BETTER PRIME MINISTER THAN HOSS, PRECISELY BECAUSE HE WAS STRONGER AND WOULD USE THE POWER OF HIS POSITION MORE EFFECTIVELY. PALESTINIAN STRENGTH HE SAID WAS IN DIRECT CORRELATION TO GOL WEAKNESS AND AS LONG AS THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT DID NOT ACT, THE PALESTINIAN POSITION WOULD CONTINUE TO GROW STRONGER. HE DEPLORED THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT'S HABIT OF USING HOSS AS THE GOL INTERLOCUTOR WITH THE PALESTINIANS SIMPLY BECAUSE HE WAS MOSLEM AND SAID HE WAS ENCOURAGED IN BASHIR GEMAYEL'S RECENT REMARKS WHICH SEEMED LESS CONFESSIONALLY ORIENTED. DESPITE THE CONTINUING DISTRUST BETWEEN LEBANESE MOSLEMS AND CHRISTIANS, AND THE PRESENT CONTROVERSY OVER THE COMPOSITION OF THE ARMY, HOURANI THOUGHT THAT IF THE GOL WERE TO TAKE A DECISIVE STEP, SUCH AS THE SENDING OF A SIZABLE UNIT OF THE LEBANESE ARMY TO ATKE CONTROL OF TYRE IN COOPERATION WITH UNIFIL FORCES, IT WOULD BE SUPPORTED BY THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THE LEBANESE, MOSLEMS AS WELL AS CHRISTIANS. EVEN THE PALESTINIANS COULD NOT ARGUE THAT THEY HAD ANY RIGHT UNDER THE CAIRO AGREEMENT TO CONTROL TYRE. WHAT IS REQUIRED,

HOURLANI SAID, IS STRONG, DRAMATIC ACTION BY PRESIDENT SARKIS
AND THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT IF THE SITUATION IS TO BE SAVED.
LANE

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PALESTINIANS, CONSULTANTS, MEETINGS, POLITICAL SITUATION, INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING FORCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BEIRUT02672
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780202-0863
Format: TEL
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780566/aaaacebj.tel
Line Count: 119
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 83e916a0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2712910
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOUTH LEBANON: CONVERSATION WITH CECIL HOURANI
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, LE, PLO, (HOURANI, CECIL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/83e916a0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014